

Iowa's Outdoor Recreation Resources

2001 Iowa SCORP

An outline map of the state of Iowa is positioned behind the text "2001 Iowa SCORP". The map shows the state's irregular borders, including the Mississippi River to the east and the Missouri River to the west.

NATURAL RESOURCE BASE

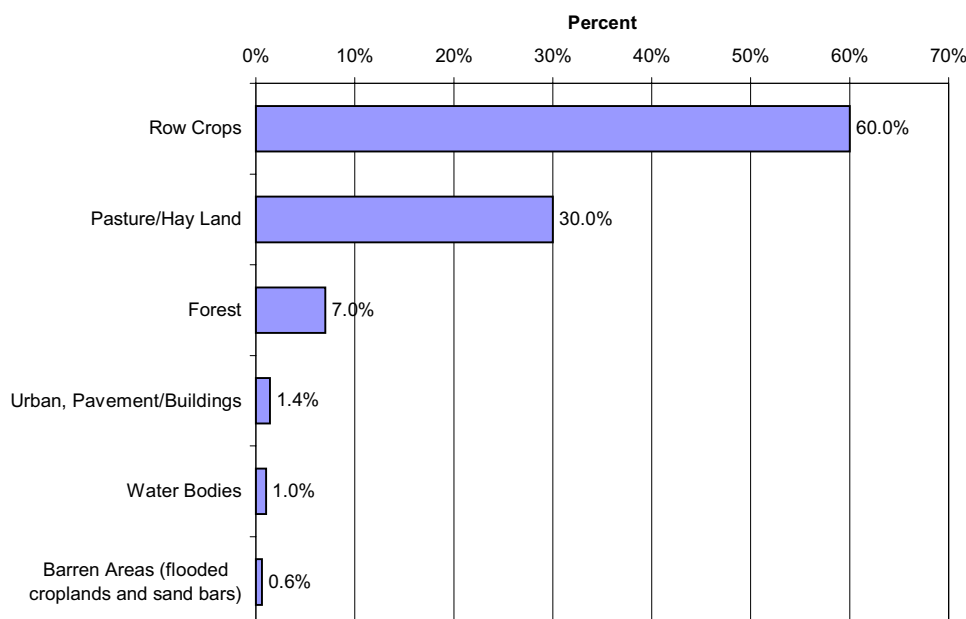
Land Use

Iowa once was a sea of tall grasses combined with 7 million acres of forests, 1.5 million acres of marshland, numerous significant water resources in its rivers, streams, and lakes and outlined on both sides by two great rivers, the Mississippi and Missouri. The land was ideal for crop production and early settlers quickly took advantage. Today Iowa remains primarily an agricultural based state; however, the shape of the land has changed drastically. Over 90% of the land in Iowa is now used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 60% of the land in Iowa is used for row crops with 30% used in other agricultural purposes including pasture and hay land. Forest area once comprised 19% of the land cover in Iowa but is now only 6%. Urban areas including pavement, buildings, and other large structures comprise slightly over 1%. Bodies of water including streams, rivers, and lakes, account for 1% while barren land, which includes flooded cropland and sand bars, makes up less than 1% of the land use in Iowa.

Agriculture

When you think of Iowa, you think of agriculture, and for good reason; Iowa leads the nation in the production of corn, soybeans, and pork and is second in egg production. By percentage, more land in Iowa is used for agricultural purposes than any other state in the country.

Land Cover in Iowa



Conservation efforts are changing the landscape and paying dividends too. Soil erosion on Iowa's cropland has dropped to 5.3 tons/acre/year, a decrease of 50% since 1982, and a 21% drop since 1992 alone. Other significant changes to the landscape include land development, where 1.7 million acres, nearly 5 percent, of Iowa is now developed land. Developed land increased at a rate of 9,520 acres/year between 1987 and 1997, and the average increased to nearly 14,000 acres per year from 1992-1997.

Source: 1997 National Resources Inventory (revised December 2000)

Woodlands



According to a survey of Iowa's forest resources conducted by the U.S. Forest Service, total forested acres increased slightly from 2 million in 1990 to 2.2 million in 2000. In 1846, when Iowa became a state, the total number of forested acres was 6.7 million. The number of acres of trees planted in Iowa has steadily risen between 1985 and 2000. In 1985, less than 4,000 acres of trees were planted. In 2000, this figure had risen to 7,500 acres of trees planted. Much of the increase is due to aggressive tree planting, encouraged by state and federal initiatives for rural areas.

The U.S. Forest Service also conducted a study using satellite images to determine the amount of urban forest in the state. The results show there are 151,261 acres of urban forest in the state. Private landowners own 92% of the woodlands in Iowa. The Iowa State Forest inventory includes four major areas, they are: Shimek State Forest, 9,029 acres; Yellow River State Forest, 8,503 acres; Stephens State Forest, 13,092 acres; and Loess Hills State Forest, 9,236 acres. There are also six smaller forest units. Combined with the 4 major units, there is a total of 40,706 acres of forest in Iowa's state forest system.

Prairies



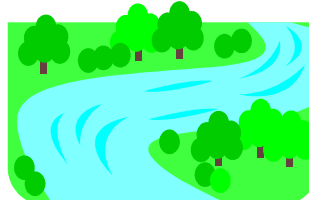
Iowa's rich prairie soils provide the base for much of the state's leading agricultural production. Only small, isolated tracts of native prairie remain due to the conversion of the land into more intensive agricultural pursuits. At the time of settlement in Iowa, prairies occupied approximately 28 million acres. In essence, those areas that were not woodlands were prairie, savanna, natural lakes and marshes.

Through the state preserves system some of the best examples of our prairies have been protected. Bits of Iowa's past are identified and protected forever. Remnants of native prairie have been identified around the state, dazzling visitors with more than 300 prairie species.

The Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (formerly Walnut Creek) was established in 1990. The refuge is located near Prairie City in Jasper County and represents the most ambitious tall grass prairie/oak savanna reconstruction project ever undertaken. Congress authorized the refuge to purchase 8,654 acres, and the first

parcel of land was purchased in April 1991. To date, 5,000 acres of the 8,654 goal have been acquired. The refuge includes the Learning Center, which includes a 13,000-square-foot exhibit hall, bookstore, meeting rooms, indoor/outdoor picnic areas, tours, and more.

Water



The typical perception of Iowa is not that of a state rich in water resources; however, in many respects that is a misperception. Iowa's major border rivers, the Mississippi and

Missouri, total 494 miles in length and provide over 217,000 acres of diverse river environments located in close proximity to a large segment of the state's population. In addition, Iowa is the only state bordered by two navigable rivers. Congress recognizes the Mississippi as both a fish and wildlife refuge and as a major transportation channel. This is the only such designation in the nation.

Additional Iowa water resources are briefly summarized in the following table.

Iowa Water Resources

Resource	Length (Miles)	Area (Acres)
Cold Water Systems	747	545
Interior Warm Water Rivers and Streams	70,698	119,129
Mississippi River (Pools 9-19)	315	201,142
Missouri River (borders Iowa)	178	16,623
Natural Lakes(36)	NA	34,522
Artificial Lakes (283)	NA	25,572
Federal Reservoirs (4)	NA	40,580
Farm Ponds (87,000)	NA	NA

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN IOWA

Iowans have the opportunity to participate in many varied and available outdoor recreational activities. Outdoor recreational areas provide benefits to both the individual and the public. Planners use parks and open spaces as an effective development tool by using them as buffers between conflicting land uses. These areas are used as environmental tools by providing flood control, preserving natural and cultural resources, and providing areas for wildlife protection. Economic benefits include being a draw for tourism and increasing an area's quality of life, which is attractive to prospective residents. Recreation has always played a major part in the lives of individual human beings. We are just beginning to understand the physical and mental benefits of recreation.

The supply of outdoor recreation areas in Iowa is monitored to help guide acquisition and development decisions. Such knowledge is instrumental in planning future outdoor recreational developments which provide benefits as listed previously. The DNR maintains two separate inventories of outdoor recreation facilities, MEGA, Maintenance, Engineering, Grants, and Accounting; and ORRF, Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities Inventory.

MEGA, Maintenance, Engineering, Grants, and Accounting

MEGA is a comprehensive maintenance and inventory management system of Department of Natural Resources facilities. MEGA is a very large and detailed database and provides the following information:

Maintenance. The system provides information for estimating, prioritizing and controlling the facility maintenance projects.

Engineering. The system provides a record of all man-made facilities including the facility's condition, size, year constructed and so on. This provides useful data for engineering, planning, and for staff administrators.

Grants. Many facilities are cost-shared with federal funds. The various federal agencies expect the DNR to maintain accountability for projects that were cost-shared with federal funds.

Accounting. The system provides accounting controls for fixed assets in a manner similar to a private sector

business. The lack of such records has been a source of continuing criticism in the annual state audit reports.

At this point all of the MEGA data has been collected and entered into a complete system. This system will provide good data for future policy and budget decisions by the DNR. This is an evolving system that is confirmed once a year, and updated quarterly.

ORRF, Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities Inventory

In the early 1970s, the Conservation Commission developed a system for the preparation and storage of a detailed statewide outdoor recreation inventory. The system is comprised of quantitative information concerning outdoor recreation facilities across Iowa that is entered and stored on a large computer database. The inventory process strives to compile information for every individual outdoor recreation area in Iowa; including all federal, state, county, municipal, private, and semiprivate areas. This information was updated in the summer of 2000 and is presented in the following section.



IOWA'S RECREATION SUPPLY

The ORRF Inventory provides some interesting information when compared to the same information that was collected in the past. The following section displays some results collected during the summer of 2000 and compares the information with 1995 data.

Table 1 displays a list of information collected and shows increases in all recreation opportunities with the exception of two, Lodge Units and All Camping Units. This represents facilities not in existence in 1995, and also includes areas that may have been missed in previous inventories, but were in existence. However, because the same method was used to collect the data, it is safe to conclude that there have been significant increases in outdoor recreation opportunities in the State of Iowa. Trends in outdoor recreation can also be seen in this table. Activities considered being traditional from a local outdoor recreation standpoint such as softball and baseball fields, game courts, and playground facilities, experienced only modest gains. More recent trends in outdoor recreation include soccer fields and skateboard parks, which were not even included in the 1995 inventory. The 2000 inventory revealed that many of these types of recreation opportunities are becoming more common, mainly at the local level. This shows that many local governments are aware of, and are attempting to meet the demands of new trends in outdoor recreation.

It was discovered that while collecting data on natural and artificial lake acres, many lakes had been counted multiple times. An attempt was made to correct this and is reflected in the large decrease of natural and artificial lakes acres from 1995 to 2000. The 2000 numbers are believed to be the most accurate information available. Oxbow lakes are included as natural lakes.

Table 2 on the following page displays the inventory of 6,551 recreation facilities in the state. The same information was collected and displayed in the 1995 SCORP when 5,775 areas were inventoried. There was a net gain of 776 areas in the inventory from 1995 to 2000.

Table 3, and charts 4a and 4b display information about the ownership and management of outdoor recreation facilities in the state based on total acres. The results are not surprising on the surface, however, the most relevant data obtained from the table and charts is the number of partnerships that are established between the various agencies. A large amount (152,620 acres) of land owned by an agency is managed by a different agency. This is a great example of agencies working together to establish relationships that ensure the best situation for the outdoor recreation area and its users.

Note: The total outdoor recreation acres listed in Table 3 is different than that listed in Tables 1 and 2. This is due to overlap of acres for areas managed by more than one agency. This occurs in rare cases but is the cause for the discrepancy.

Selected Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Table 1

Category	1995	2000	Difference	Percent Gain or Loss
Total Acres	726,825	900,767	174,000	23.9%
Land Acres	590,064	700,163	110,099	18.6%
Public Hunting Acres	418,820	544,266	125,406	29.9%
Natural Lake Acres	55,354	45,654	-9,700	-17.5%
Artificial Lake Acres	118,581	69,854	-48,727	-41.1%
All Trails Miles	2,977	3,664	687	23.1%
All Camping Units	35,557	34,979	-578	-1.6%
Shelter Houses	3,347	4,030	683	20.4%
Lodge Units	7,699	6,258	-1,441	-18.7%
Softball/Baseball Fields	1,896	2,071	175	9.2%
Game Courts	1,433	1,696	263	18.4%
Playgrounds	2,997	3,118	121	4%
Playfields (Acres)	3,508	3,947	439	12.5%
Tennis Courts	1,423	1,445	22	1.6%
Soccer Fields	NA	289	289	NA
Skateboard Parks	NA	20	20	NA

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES AND FACILITIES INVENTORY
SUMMER 2000
SUMMARY REPORT FOR 6,551 AREAS
Table 2**

TOTAL ACRES	900,767	PICNIC SHELTERS	
		OPEN SHELTER HOUSES	3,419
LAND		ENCLOSED SHELTER HOUSES	611
LAND ACRES	700,163		
PUBLIC HUNTING ACRES	544,226	SWIMMING POOLS	
		SWIMMING	441
WATER		WADING	318
NATURAL LAKE ACRES	45,654		
ARTIFICIAL LAKE ACRES	69,854	LODGE UNITS	
		RESORT ROOMS	5,219
MARSH		MODERN CABINS	943
NATURAL MARSH	28,539	NON-MODERN CABINS	96
ARTIFICIAL MARSH	32,699		
		SHOOTING RANGES	
BOATING		SKEET	29
BOAT RAMPS (LANES)	1,298	TRAP	118
DOCK SLIPS	4,851	SPORTING CLAYS	16
RENTAL ESTABLISHMENT	1,044	RIFLE & PISTOL	104
		ARCHERY	102
BEACH FRONTAGE (FEET)	85,239		
		SPORT AREAS	
TRAILS		SOFTBALL	1,341
ALL TRAILS (MILES)	3,664	BASEBALL	730
EQUESTRIAN TRAILS	917	GAME COURTS	1,696
FOOT TRAILS	2,911	PLAYGROUNDS	3,118
BIKE TRAILS	1,398	PLAYFIELDS (ACRES)	3,947
SNOWMOBILE TRAILS	980	TENNIS COURTS	1,445
ATV TRAILS	74	SOCCER FIELDS	289
CROSS COUNTRY SKIING TRAILS	1,560	SKATEBOARD PARKS	20
MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	425		
		GOLF COURSES	
FACILITIES		PAR 3	14
INTERPRETIVE AREAS	561	9 HOLE	328
ACCESSIBLE AREAS	806	18 HOLE	130
		FRISBEE GOLF	8
SITES			
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS	138	WINTER SPORTS AREAS	352
HISTORICAL AREAS	548		
		ICE SKATING AREAS	255
CAMPING			
MODERN CAMPING UNITS	20,986	LATRINES	
NON MODERN CAMPING UNITS	11,052	MODERN (UNITS)	4,303
PRIMITIVE CAMPING UNITS	2,941	PIT OR VAULT (UNITS)	2,243
PICNIC TABLES	58,635	PARKING (SPACES)	178,761

Table 3

OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF IOWA'S RECREATION LANDS								
MANAGEMENT	OWNERSHIP							
	County	Federal	Municipal	Private	State	Semi-Private	Total	Percent
County	134,434	453	1,089	1,717	19,918	1,920	159,531	17.1
Federal	0	172,710	0	0	5	0	172,715	18.5
Municipal	255	40	50,293	587	514	1,296	52,985	5.7
Private	287	294	706	71,584	25	1,277	74,173	8.0
State	3,678	100,054	3,644	152	339,296	0	446,824	47.9
Semi-Private	335	4	63	14,306	1	11,375	26,084	2.8
Total	138,989	273,555	55,795	88,346	359,759	15,868	932,312	
Percent	14.9	29.3	6.0	9.5	38.6	1.7		100
Federal U.S. Natural Resources Con. Service U.S. Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Park Service			Municipal Municipal Park and Recreation Depts. Municipal Park and Recreation Boards City Councils Schools			Semi-Private Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Affiliates YMCA and YWCA 4-H Other special needs groups		
State Department of Natural Resources Historical Society Department of Transportation			Private Private Enterprise Individuals Churches			County County Conservation Boards		

Chart 4a

Management of Iowa's Recreation Lands

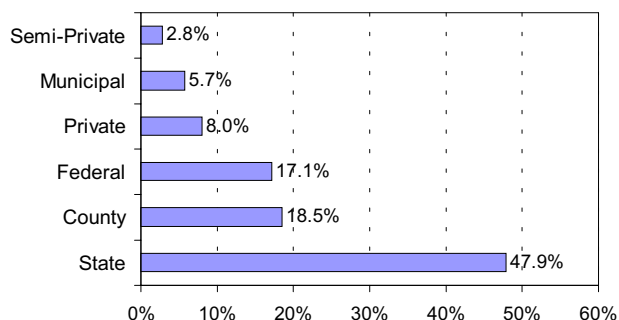
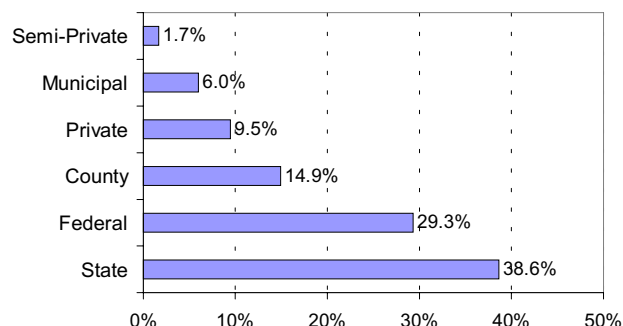


Chart 4b

Ownership of Iowa's Recreation Lands



The ORRF inventory can be used to compare the supply of recreational facilities across the state at various levels. A printout showing the total number of facilities in the state was presented in Table 2. To show comparisons in different areas of the state, we can break down the state by planning regions (Figure 5). Table 6 shows the number of facilities in each region. These figures can be compared with the population by region figures at the bottom of the table to make comparisons between regions. Comparisons between the number of specific outdoor recreation opportunities and the population served can be made

between each region to form basic conclusions on a region's possible deficiencies. One should remember, however, that these figures cannot accurately reflect an area's specific local recreation needs. Each area has unique qualities that must be taken into account to determine actual need. For example, some areas may have landforms that are conducive to the development of outdoor recreation facilities, while other areas may offer land more susceptible to agricultural uses. The figures presented serve the purpose to display the findings of the inventory and to break the information down into regions to allow for closer analysis.

Figure 5

Recreational Opportunities in Iowa by Region

	Table 6									
	REGION									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Total Acres	89,586	56,639	121,951	81,832	123,467	167,059	49,563	132,768	77,902	900,767
Land Acres	46,885	38,865	116,654	66,859	108,387	126,876	38,040	94,936	62,662	700,163
Public Hunting Acres	50,956	33,806	90,790	47,940	64,859	97,963	26,163	77,499	54,251	544,226
Natural Lake Acres	30,568	5,861	1,587	4,949	391	452	1,111	149	586	45,654
Artificial Lake Acres	714	459	1,873	3,204	10,581	9,211	6,526	33,494	3,792	69,854
Natural Marsh Acres	10,216	7,739	408	5,422	602	1,050	672	377	2,053	28,539
Artificial Marsh Acres	165	3,277	1,617	1,271	1,508	14,135	1,561	1,415	7,750	32,699
River Front Miles	100	97	330	108	260	337	36	10,596	81	11,945
Boat Rental Establishments	37	23	304	13	43	54	90	451	29	1,044
Beach Front Miles	35,822	5,517	6,214	8,661	8,260	8,110	3,235	4,470	4,950	85,239
Boat Ramps	221	96	160	127	151	198	91	136	118	1,298
Dock Slips	361	155	1,390	213	827	650	179	502	574	4,851
All Trails Miles	220	193	562	455	672	540	261	355	406	3,664
Equestrian Trails Miles	91	55	143	71	217	98	63	74	105	917
Foot Trails Miles	205	228	415	312	580	393	143	315	321	2,911
Bike Trails Miles	108	135	181	180	306	169	91	96	132	1,398
Mountain Bike Trails Miles	16	89	117	21	104	30	9	13	25	424
Snowmobile Trails Miles	87	176	145	137	134	71	41	127	63	980
ATV Trails Miles	0	0	20	31	0	5	0	18	0	74
Cross County Ski Miles	122	155	223	157	319	168	78	185	155	1,560
Interpretive Facilities	35	36	45	27	263	66	22	40	27	561
Accessible Facilities	149	83	85	86	164	92	39	71	37	806
Archaeological Sites	18	8	29	5	28	21	11	10	8	138
Historical Sites	53	40	101	57	104	53	35	35	70	548
Modern Camping Units	2,094	1,269	3,009	2,104	3,663	3,604	1,337	2,205	1,701	20,986
Non-Modern Camping Units	421	610	1,760	1,257	1,297	2,566	853	1,313	975	11,052
Primitive Camping Units	181	151	686	200	613	354	166	341	249	2,941
Picnic Tables	4,389	4,274	8,913	6,707	10,070	10,298	4,505	5,361	4,118	58,635
Open Shelters	321	266	527	290	609	582	281	263	280	3,419
Enclosed Shelters	99	49	61	98	128	81	22	32	41	611
Parking Spaces	18,237	13,764	23,704	19,465	36,914	30,400	13,080	12,375	10,822	178,761
Swimming Pools	60	38	54	46	78	73	29	29	34	441
Wading Pools	44	34	31	28	78	46	18	23	16	318
Resort Rooms	3,290	816	321	231	193	92	150	57	69	5,219
Modern Cabins	191	42	155	93	195	103	52	34	78	943
Camping Cabins	6	17	3	7	21	20	17	0	5	96
Skeet Shooting Ranges	5	2	4	1	6	1	3	5	2	29
Trap Shooting Ranges	14	9	38	4	9	15	11	10	8	118
Sporting Clay Ranges	1	0	2	1	4	2	4	1	1	16
Rifle and Pistol Ranges	17	3	11	12	16	18	4	10	13	104
Archery Ranges	10	6	23	8	17	14	5	5	14	102
Softball Ranges	116	98	214	122	294	243	87	78	89	1,341
Baseball Fields	72	46	68	98	142	133	59	41	71	730
Game Courts	162	125	278	169	405	213	126	98	120	1,696
Playgrounds	292	267	459	306	561	472	246	209	306	3,118
Open Playfields	397	289	630	274	757	845	190	347	219	3,947
Tennis Courts	162	127	203	154	296	226	97	89	91	1,445
Soccer Fields	14	8	26	24	87	74	27	12	17	289
Skateboard Parks	0	3	3	2	5	3	2	2	0	20
Frisbee Golf Courses	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	8
Par 3 Courses	0	0	3	2	5	2	1	1	0	14
9 Hole Courses	52	45	50	36	47	37	21	19	21	328
18 Hole Courses	12	5	15	7	31	42	7	4	7	130
Winter Sports Areas	30	26	54	50	77	69	11	14	21	352
Ice Skating Areas	33	24	50	19	60	34	8	12	15	255
Modern Latrines	535	336	577	439	816	660	237	412	291	4,303
Pit or Vault Latrines	142	139	378	190	342	383	187	261	221	2,243
Population	186,274	178,181	370,596	234,979	653,392	600,646	186,689	154,658	211,340	2,776,755

OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEYS



Iowans have a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to choose from in the state, and several general surveys have been conducted to determine what outdoor recreation activities Iowans prefer and how often they participate in them. Other, more specific surveys have been undertaken to gather detailed information regarding specific outdoor recreation activities. These surveys serve as a vital source in understanding attitudes and opinions toward outdoor recreation issues in Iowa. This information can be used for a variety of purposes including future outdoor recreation development and funding.

Several surveys and studies have been completed recently which assess the needs and attitudes of Iowa's recreation participants. Several of these will be briefly discussed here.

Recreational Activities & Environmental Opinions: A Statewide Survey of Adult Iowans

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources commissioned the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa to conduct a survey to assess adult Iowans' participation in outdoor recreational activities and their opinions about the protection and management of Iowa's natural resources. Specifically, the survey concentrated on assessing the respondents' views of five major content areas:

- Participation in outdoor recreational activities
- Adult and youth fishing habits
- Use of open spaces and attitudes about funding open spaces
- Opinions concerning the management and protection of Iowa's natural resources
- Characteristics of the respondents' favorite vacations
- Opinions concerning a destination park in Iowa

This study was not intended to determine the feasibility of building a destination park in Iowa. It also did not ask respondents to make relative funding decisions, such as prioritizing how funding should be distributed to manage and protect Iowa's natural resources.

The survey population consisted of adult Iowans, at least 18 years of age living in households with residential telephone lines. Using a sample of telephone numbers drawn by Genesys Sampling Systems, CSBR called a total of 5,160 telephone numbers to yield 1,203 completed interviews.

Summary and Conclusions of Findings

Nearly three-fourths of those surveyed had visited one of Iowa's state parks or recreational areas between May 1, 1999 and April 30, 2000.

The amount of time respondents reported spending on outdoor recreational activities compared to 5 years ago was:

- More now (25.9%)
- The same (40.3%)
- Less now (33.8%)

The outdoor recreational activities with the highest participation rates were:

- Picnicking (72.9%)
- Hiking or nature walks (61.1%)
- Swimming in a pool (48.4%)
- Fishing (45.3%)
- Nature studies such as bird watching (41.3%)

With the exception of picnicking, participation rates varied across age groups. Generally, participation was lower among those aged 65 or older, but nature studies such as bird watching were more common among older respondents.



One-fifth (21.3%) of those surveyed reported that their outdoor recreational activities were inhibited by limited or unsuitable recreational areas or facilities in Iowa. Commonly mentioned inhibited activities were: biking on paved trails, power boating or water skiing, hiking or nature walks, and fishing.

Approximately one-third of those surveyed were unsure of the fishing quality in Iowa's state parks and recreational areas. A similar percentage were unsure of how present fishing quality compares with that of 5 years ago.

Of those with an opinion

46.0% rated the quality of fishing in Iowa's state parks and recreational areas as good, whereas less than one-tenth (9.4%) rated it poor, 53.6% reported that the fishing quality had not changed during the past 5 years, but 32.1% reported it has improved.



Most (85.6%) of current Iowa anglers reported that they fished at least once in waterways associated with one of Iowa's state parks or recreational areas during the past year.

The majority of current Iowa anglers reported that they would visit Iowa's state parks and recreational areas more often if the fishing quality were improved:

63.0% of the anglers who had visited a park or recreational area said they would visit more often,
57.5% of the anglers who had not visited a state park or recreational area said they would visit more often.

Two-thirds (66.3%) of the households with children aged 15 or younger reported that at least one of these children fished in Iowa during the past year.

Three-fourths (74.5%) of those surveyed reported that they had visited open space areas during the past 2 years.

Open spaces were very important to quality of life according to 67.3% of the respondents.

Increased state and local government funding for the purpose of buying privately held open spaces were both supported by a majority of the respondents.

It is very important according to at least three-fourths of the respondents to spend more money to protect and manage Iowa's:

Rivers and streams (82.2%)
Lakes and shores (80.4%)
Wildlife habitats (76.3%)

There was overwhelming support (92.5%) for applying more lottery money to manage and protect Iowa's natural resources.

If a destination park were built in Iowa, 61.9% of those surveyed reported that they likely or definitely would vacation there.

The most frequently mentioned reasons why they might not vacation at a destination park were:

Do not enjoy the types of activities associated with destination park vacations
Enjoy vacationing outside of Iowa
Old age
The park would be crowded or noisy
Too busy to vacation anywhere

The five features respondents gave the highest mean importance ratings to were:

Picnic areas
Hiking or nature trails
Playgrounds
Fishing
Beaches with open water swimming

RV camping, modern cabins with electricity and plumbing, and tent camping were the highest rated accommodations.

Neither restaurants, stores for shopping, nor on-site day care were rated as very high in importance as services which should be offered at destinations parks.

Regardless of the respondents' reported likelihood of vacationing at a destination park in Iowa, there was consistent agreement about which features, accommodations, and services were important to be offered at such a park.

Conclusions



Adult Iowans report that open spaces are important to the quality of life of Iowans, and they support public ownership of these spaces. Generally, the public's opinion is that spending more money to manage and protect Iowa's natural resources is important. Several of the possible funding options that were assessed in the survey received support by a majority of the respondents. There was a high level of support for applying more of the current lottery monies for the purpose of managing and protecting Iowa's natural resources. The management of Iowa's natural resources has been part of the recent discussion regarding developing destination parks in Iowa. Although this survey was not designed to determine the feasibility of such a project, it does appear that most Iowans consider these parks as attractive potential vacation destinations.

For more detailed information on the survey contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Survey of Iowa State Park and Recreation Area Users

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources commissioned the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa to conduct a survey to assess adult Iowans' participation in outdoor recreational activities at state parks, their opinions about their state parks visits, and their attitudes regarding the state park system.

Randomly selected park visitors at 49 of Iowa's state parks and recreation areas were given questionnaires at predetermined times on three days during July 2000. The questionnaires were distributed by park personnel to visitors as they entered or exited the parks. The questionnaires could be completed and returned to park staff that day, or they could be mailed to the CSBR at the University of Northern Iowa. A total of 1,525 questionnaires were returned and processed for data analysis.

IDNR and CSBR developed the questionnaire by focusing on obtaining information that was determined to be the most beneficial for various areas of use. Questions used in the 1995 survey were also used again in order to allow comparisons between past and present park users. CSBR developed the training materials and all materials necessary to conduct the study. DNR personnel were responsible for following the research protocol and distributing the questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed on July 11, 15, and 23. These dates were selected to increase the likelihood that the sample would be representative of Iowa's state park and recreation area users.

Over the three-day distribution period, 3,099 questionnaires were handed out with 1,525 being returned for a return rate of 49 percent.

Summary of Findings



Most park users visited the park with another person or as part of a small group. In most cases, the people in the group were immediate family members (71.3%) or friends (30.3%). The median group size, including children, was four.

One-fourth (25.0%) of the park users reported that they visit Iowa state parks at least 30 times per year.

The major factors that park users reported influenced how often they visit Iowa's state parks were the amount of leisure time they have available and the proximity of the park to their homes.

Park users had favorable impressions of the overall condition of the parks, with 95% of the park visitors giving ratings of good or excellent.

The majority of the park users reported the facilities they used were clean, and a similar percentage reported the facilities were in good structural condition.

Three-fourths (74.1%) of those who used the lakes either actively (e.g. boating) or passively (e.g. looking at it) rated the condition of the lakes as good or excellent.

Approximately one-half of the park users reported that they did not know or were uncertain about the quality of fishing at the park's lake. Of those with an opinion, 54.8% rated the fishing as fair and 25.0% rated the fishing as good.



More than two-thirds of the park users reported that they did not know or were uncertain as to how the fishing quality of the lake compared with that of 5 years ago. Of those with an opinion, 31.4% reported that it was better now and 38.8% reported that it was the same as 5 years ago.

Most park visitors reported that the park staff were available, helpful, courteous, and neatly dressed.

Maintaining the facilities in good working condition and ensuring visitor safety were the two most important duties of park staff according to the park visitors.

Past experience, scenery at the park, and the park's facilities were the major factors that influenced park users when they selected a park to visit.

The main way that park users reported learning about the park they were visiting was because they lived close to it. The second major source of information about the parks was through friends or relatives.

The park users reported that highway signs, road maps, newspaper, the Internet, and television were the five best methods for getting information about Iowa's state parks to them.

Driving through the park and general relaxation were the two most commonly engaged in activities while at the park. Picnicking, visiting with friends, hiking, and fishing were other popular activities.

Only a small percentage (3.1%) of park users participated in structured park programs, but nearly all (92.7%) of those who did so reported that it increased their enjoyment of the park.

The median amount spent during park visits was \$51.50 for the entire group. This included food, gasoline, supplies, camping fees, and all other expenses. More than one-fourth of the park visitor groups reported that they spent less than \$15.

Three-fourths (76.4%) of the park users reported that Iowa's state parks were appropriately developed.

One-third (33.2%) of park users would like to see more lakes for fishing. About 30% would like to see more overnight cabins. One-fourth (25.4%) would like to see additional swimming areas.

The greatest interest in alternative overnight options was reported for cabins with modern facilities and shoreline campgrounds.



About one-half of the park users reported that they would likely vacation at a destination park if one were built in Iowa. The reported likelihood of vacationing at a destination park was greatest among park users ages 18 through 34 and lowest among park users aged 65 or older.

Park users reported that they would most like to see cabins, facilities for expanded water activities, and eating establishments included in a destination park. With respect to activities that could be available at destination parks, park users reported that they would most like to be able to use nature trails, go fishing, swim or water park style activities, and participate in recreational activities on the open water or beaches.

Among the park users, the recreational activity with the greatest level of self-reported increase over the past 3 years was visiting public parks and campgrounds. The five activities with the largest net increase over the past 3 years (among those who participate in the activity) were visiting parks and campgrounds, trailer or vehicle camping, nature studies such as birdwatching, driving for pleasure, and powerboating.

The four recreational activities for which park users anticipate they will increase their level of participation during the next 5 years were general relaxation, visiting with friends, driving through parks, and picnicking.

Fishing in Iowa, A Survey of 1994 Iowa Anglers



A telephone survey of people with a state fishing or hunting and fishing combination license during the 1994 seasons, was conducted by the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Social and Behavioral Research for the DNR in February and March of 1995. The purpose of the survey is to provide the department with current data regarding the fishing practices and preferences of Iowa anglers. This data is then used as a management tool to identify trends of Iowa anglers.

Some of the findings from the 1995 survey results are:

1. 364,246 licensed anglers fished a total of more than 8.5 million days in 1994.
2. They averaged 24 days of fishing, catching 39.8 million fish in 1994.
3. 1994 anglers preferred to fish for catfish or large mouth bass.
4. More than 1 in 3 anglers indicated that catching and releasing was a very important outcome when fishing.
5. Over half of 1994 anglers believe water quality and quality of fish habitat are factors that most impact state fish populations.
6. Poor water quality was the most frequently attributed reason in 1994 for any decline in fishing quality.

7. Over 70% of 1994 anglers reported that the quality of fishing had stayed the same or improved in the last 10 years.
8. Slightly over 40% of 1994 anglers reported they fished less often now than a decade ago, citing as the major reason, lack of time.

For more information on this survey, contact the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored the completion of this survey. The 1996 survey is the ninth in a series of surveys on resource use by anglers, hunters, and those who enjoy observing wildlife. The purpose of the Survey is to gather information on the number of anglers, hunters, and wildlife-watching participants in the United States. Information also is collected on how often these recreationists participate and how much they spend on their activities. The information collected is reported nationally as well as in individual state supplements.

The 1996 Survey revealed that more than 1 million Iowa residents 16 years old and older engaged in fishing, hunting, or wildlife-watching activities. Of the total number of participants, 51% fished, 30 % hunted, and 83 % participated in wildlife-watching activities where the enjoyment of wildlife was the primary purpose of the activity. Wildlife-watching activities included observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife.

The sum of anglers, hunters and wildlife-watching participants exceeds the total number of participants in wildlife-related recreation because many individuals engaged in more than one wildlife-related activity.

In 1996, state residents and non-residents spent \$877 million on wildlife-associated recreation in Iowa. Of that total, trip related expenditures were \$237 million and equipment purchases totaled \$526 million. The remaining \$114 million was spent on licenses, contributions, land ownership and leasing, and other items and services.

For more information on this survey and the Iowa Supplement, contact the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends



This is a very comprehensive national study of outdoor recreation published in 1999. The Principal Investigator of the study was H. Ken Cordell; however, several authors and agencies contributed. The study overviews the national demand and supply trends, the current situation and likely futures of outdoor recreation and wilderness, as these trends and futures are affected by rapid social, technological and economic change.

Some general findings that the report discusses in detail are as follows:

- Wilderness Benefits are Expanding
- The Outdoor Recreation Market is Expected to Continue to Grow
- Access to the Private Land Base for Recreation Continues to Decline
- Increased Demand for Nearby Recreation Resources
- Resource Changes Have not Been Equal Across Regions or Settings

The survey also makes several more specific observations of the following topics: Access, Resource Impacts, Management Evolution, Benefits-based Management, Improved Data, Better Understanding the Enthusiasts, Collaboration, and The Underserved.

The report is an excellent resource of national outdoor recreation issues and should be viewed by all involved in outdoor recreation planning and development. For information on how to obtain a copy of the report, contact Sagamore Publishing at www.sagamorepub.com.

IOWA TOURISM



The Iowa Department of Economic Development (DED) has had numerous surveys and reports completed detailing tourism and its impact on the Iowa economy. Travel and tourism in Iowa equates to a substantial economic boon through dollars spent, jobs created and tax revenues collected. These effects are felt throughout the state. Much of this visitation to and within the state relates directly to the outdoor recreation opportunities Iowa provides.

DED has prepared or has contracted to have prepared the following reports/surveys dealing with Iowa tourism: The Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties, 2000 Iowa Welcome Center Survey and Longwood's International. Each of these reports documents the purpose, destination and the benefit to Iowa's economy that results from those traveling within, to and through the State of Iowa.

Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties

Based on the 1999 study prepared for the Iowa Division of Tourism by the U.S. Travel Data Center, \$4 billion was spent in Iowa for transportation, lodging, food, entertainment, recreation and incidentals by U.S. resident travelers. This figure may be somewhat conservative for the following reasons. Due to the restrictions of the definition of "traveler", many dollars spent were excluded from the study. Expenditures in anticipation of a trip on goods and services cannot be accurately quantified, thus are not included. Examples may include, tennis lessons, tennis racquets, travel books, language lessons, etc. Also excluded, is the purchase of some major consumer durable goods such as boats, boating supplies, off-road vehicles, etc. Recreational vehicles such as campers, motor homes, trailers and mobile homes, however, are included in the figures presented in the report.

Payroll (wages and salary) paid by Iowa travel-related firms and directly attributable to traveler spending totaled \$835 million, an increase of 4.4 percent from the previous year.

One of the most important benefits of travel and tourism is the employment which this activity supports. Travel creates jobs for individuals within communities by attracting money from outside the community. Due to the diversity of spending while traveling, a wide variety of jobs at every skill level are created. Total estimated payroll was \$835 million in 1999. Travel-generated employment in Iowa was highest in the food service and entertainment and recreation industries.

Another benefit of travel and tourism is the tax revenues generated. Travel-generated tax revenues at the state and local levels raised nearly \$311 million in 1999.

2000 Iowa Welcome Center Survey

Iowa has 23 welcome centers to provide tourism information and assist travelers with their questions on Iowa.

Guest books were placed in all centers and every 46th travel party registering was personally interviewed by the staff. 5,139 travel parties were interviewed. Of the travel parties interviewed, 47% came from the target markets of Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska and South Dakota.

Of total trip time, respondents were planning to spend 3.9 days in Iowa. Motels were the most frequently used overnight accommodation with state, county and private campgrounds the second most common.

Average daily expenditures were \$165.79. Lodging, food and transportation were the three greatest reasons for daily expenditures. From simple multiplication of average trip length in Iowa and average daily expenditures, it can be determined that the average travel party spent nearly \$846 daily in Iowa. When taking into account the money multiplier effect for travel-related expenditures, over \$159 million impacted the Iowa economy from those persons interviewed at the Welcome Centers.

Each welcome center is supplied with a number of informative pamphlets about places to see, facilities, events taking place, etc. When asked if their length of stay would increase because of the information received, over 34 percent indicated their stay in Iowa would be extended.

Probably the most interesting information coming from the welcome center survey from an outdoor recreation perspective, is the interest areas for traveling. Respondents were asked to give their first, second and third area of interest for traveling the State of Iowa, the following table shows the results.

2000 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Interest Areas For Traveling

Sight-seeing	54.2%
Historic	42.1%
Friends/Family	39.6%
Scenic Byways	30.2%
Museums	21.9%
Shopping	19.7%
Camping	19.4%
Festivals	17.7%
Ethnic	12.2%
Casinos	11.2%
Boating	5.6%
Other	8.5%

Iowa's Position in the U.S. Touring Vacation Market

This report was prepared for the Department of Economic Development by Longwood's International and aimed at showing ways to increase Iowa's share of the vacation market. The report showed that special events and touring trips were Iowa's most important marketable segments.

The states that make up Iowa's biggest touring vacationers include Iowa itself, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri and Nebraska. Overall, Iowa's major image strength in the eyes of American touring vacationers in general is that Iowa is seen as more hospitable than the average American touring destination. It was the hospitality image strength that was used to develop the new tourism theme "IOWA Come Be Our Guest"®.

In terms of outdoor sports and recreation activities, visitors rate Iowa higher for: golf, fishing and hunting and camping than the average destination. When comparing U.S. and Iowa activities while on vacations, the participation percentages of vacationers in Iowa were higher in such outdoor recreation activities as camping, fishing, hunting and golfing in Iowa than the participation percentages nationally. Participation was slightly lower in Iowa for such activities as boating/watersports, viewing wildlife/birds, swimming and snowskiing.

As the Longwood's International report indicates, Iowa has many outdoor recreation opportunities that are utilized by Iowans and by touring vacationers.

Iowa Trails 2000



A state trails plan should provide a framework for the implementation of trail initiatives throughout the state. The Iowa Department of Transportation along with other state agencies and individuals, developed Iowa Trails 2000 to do this by offering resources and recommendations to

trail planners and implementers, including state agencies, local organizations, regional governments, county conservation boards, and nonprofit organizations. Iowa Trails 2000 was directed at the following goals:

- Setting forth a framework for subsequent trails system planning by a variety of agencies and jurisdictions.
- Offering valuable resources to trail implementers, which can be used to implement either mode-specific or regional trails plans.
- Involving the public in the trail planning process in a variety of ways, including open houses, exhibits, newsletters, and an Iowa Trails Web site.
- Providing local communities an understanding of the benefits of trails, a valuable tool for local trail planning and implementation efforts.
- Establishing design guidelines for all trail modes, to encourage consistency in quality and design of trails statewide.
- Considering the benefits of trails as both recreation and transportation amenities.

These goals are the driving force behind Iowa Trails 2000. The statewide trails vision set forth in the document will be implemented by state, regional, and local efforts. By setting forth a variety of guidelines and policies, and by including a statewide vision map, Iowa Trails 2000 encourages and facilitates the implementation of trails in a variety of ways.

Iowa Trails 2000 outlines many aspects of trail development including: Needs and Benefits, the Statewide Trails Vision, Design Guidelines, Cost Analysis, Implementing the Vision, Operations and Maintenance, and Recommendations. There are six recommendations that are designed to accomplish the goals of the statewide trails vision for Iowa: The headings for each recommendation are as follows: 1) Increase Funding for Trail Projects, 2) Establish a Trails Advisory Group, 3) Increase Rate of Trails Development, 4) More Proactive Role by State Agencies, 5) Subsequent Trails System Plans, and 6) Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation.

For more information on the Iowa Trails 2000 document, contact the Iowa Department of Transportation.